

Winter Outlook, Northern Arizona Safety Update

As many have heard this year is an El Nino weather cycle year. But the perceived “snowmageddon” is not what the El Nino cycle means. BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front): It will likely be a wetter than normal year, but the precipitation will not likely occur all at once. Northern Arizona has a 50% change of being “wetter” than a normal year in the 2015-2016 winter season, but could still end up accumulating only the average precipitation we normally receive (33% chance). Six of the seven past El Nino cycles have shown a strong tendency to be wetter than a normal year.

What determines an El Nino cycle and what is a “normal” year.

When water temperatures off the coast of South America are 2 degrees Celsius warmer than normal for a considerable amount of time, this begins the El Nino Cycle. When the water temperature is above normal, it affects the atmosphere above it and that in turn affects the jet stream over North America. This generates an El Nino pattern, which can increase overall precipitation,

What is a normal year? NOAA determines a normal year by looking at a 30 year average. The next “normal” or baseline assessment will use data from 1991-2020.

What can you do to be prepared and to help others should the need arise this winter season?

First, prepare yourself and your family. You cannot help anyone else or make it to work if you and your family are not prepared. How do you do this? Attached is the check list flyer and some pointers for consideration:

- Make it a practice to fill up your gas tank when you are half full, don't wait until empty.
- Keep necessities in your car; space saver bag with blankets, shovels, windshield scrapers and brushes, potable water, sealed snacks.
- Make sure your windshield wipers are replaced if needed.
- Make sure your home is prepared; again potable water, enough food for at least a week, do you have enough gas and/or propane, and if needed do you have an alternative fuel/heat source IE firewood?
- If you have livestock, do you have the means to get to them (snow blower, shovels) and do you have enough food for them?
- If you live in the County, where services are not available, can you readily clear your roads in order to get to help or allow help to get to you?
- Do you know your neighbors? If not, you might want to get to know and coordinate with them; no one makes it through a bad situation alone.
- Be prepared to walk, there are times even first responders must hike in to you, you might need to trek it to your first aid.
- See Red Cross Ready flyer below, and pass along to your friends and colleagues.

http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240231_WinterStorms.pdf

Now that you are prepared, as you are able volunteer to assist your local first responders!